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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNSC](#) [ZI](#) [LT](#)

SUBJECT: LESOTHO: ZIMBABWE UN DEMARCHE DELIVERED; TSVANGIRAI MEETS DEPUTY PM

REF: A) STATE 50339; B) MASERU 135

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On May 14, Ambassador delivered ref A demarche to Minister of Foreign Affairs Tsekoe regarding UN and SADC engagement on the crisis in Zimbabwe. Tsekoe expressed particular appreciation for recognition of SADC's leadership role in seeking a peaceful resolution to the electoral process, adding that the GOL had conducted a substantive dialogue the previous day with visiting Zimbabwean opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai (ref B). Regarding the latter's May 13 afternoon visit to Lesotho, a GOL press release said that Deputy Prime Minister Lehohla had discussed Tsvangirai's concerns about escalating violence, SADC involvement in the anticipated presidential run-off elections, and a potential forthcoming SADC extraordinary heads of state and government summit. Speaking to a local journalist, Tshangarai said that his MDC party will enter the run-off, but SADC must create an enabling environment that will give security and confidence to Zimbabweans. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) On May 14, Ambassador and DCM delivered ref A talking points to Minister of Foreign Affairs Tsekoe regarding UN and SADC engagement on the crisis in Zimbabwe. Minister Tsekoe expressed appreciation for the demarche, in particular USG recognition of SADC's leadership role in seeking a peaceful resolution to the electoral process, and said he would relay the points directly to Deputy Prime Minister Lehohla at a follow-on meeting. Tsekoe noted that in order to help facilitate the process, the GOL had agreed to meet the previous afternoon with visiting Zimbabwean opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai for a substantive discussion (ref B). Although the Foreign Minister did not offer further details on the discussions, he added that Tsvangirai "had asked for 30 minutes to brief us, but we engaged him for nearly two hours."

¶3. (U) Further to the May 13 Tsvangirai visit, a May 14 GOL press release stated that the Zimbabwean's meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister had addressed the following issues:

- The Movement for Democratic Change's (MDC) concerns about escalating acts of violence and intimidation against the Zimbabwean citizens, in particular supporters of the opposition MDC;
- A request from the MDC for support from the GOL, as a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), in ensuring peaceful and fair conduct of the forthcoming presidential run-off elections in Zimbabwe;
- An MDC appeal to SADC member states to convene an extraordinary SADC summit of heads of state and government to discuss the date of the envisaged run-off presidential election, minimum conditions for the run-off presidential election, and mechanisms for the transfer of power to the winning party.

¶4. (U) Speaking to a journalist from the state-owned Lesotho News Agency (LENA) following the May 13 meeting, Tshangarai said

his MDC party will enter the run-off, but SADC must create an enabling environment that will give security and confidence to Zimbabweans. "We believe that we have a two-pronged approach to the crisis in Zimbabwe, which is either a dialogue or a run-off.

Because everyone in the region has chosen a route to going towards the run-off, we are prepared for it," he added. The MDC leader further said there have been attempts to convince ZANU-PF that it is necessary or desirable to negotiate a settlement rather hold a run-off, but ZANU-PF seems unready "to accept the will of the people."

¶5. (SBU) COMMENT: According to Embassy sources, the GOL delegation agreed to attend the proposed new SADC extraordinary summit if it is convened by the current SADC chair and to support decisions reached collectively. While only a few details concerning Tshangarai's May 13 meeting with top GOL officials are now emerging, we will continue to observe Lesotho's position on Zimbabwe to gauge any deviation from its current position to remain in step with noninterventionist SADC neighbors. END COMMENT.

NOLAN